

SWAG  
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# SWAG



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Back Cover found by Stephen Morton

Badgers always by Fiona Stewart-Taylor

All doodles in this issue by Ben Batchelder

Other submissions as credited

## apologies

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. **The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it.** Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. **Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views.** (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an honestly pretty adequate monitor, nowadays. You should come. We don't bite. **You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in the Dining Commons, the post office, or on the door of your mod** (if we get to putting it on doors, anyway).

## TO SUBMIT

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu or Rachel Ithen, Box 1413.

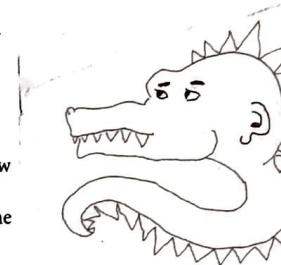


## FIONA STEWART-TAYLOR

So I'm sitting in the Omen office the day after layout, since I didn't write this punctually, after getting my ass handed to me by a dude much better than me at fencing. I think our final score in the bout was 1-5, which is not even close. It was awesome.

The only "class" I'm taking over Jan Term is fencing, and I am infinitely happier for it. (Aside: The fencing instructor was one of the founders of the Omen. Nice job, dude.) My friend Lex and I made a pact, two actually but shaving our heads isn't relevant to this editorial, which was that we would either take a really easy Jan term or we would take only three classes spring semester. We both opted to take fencing over January, as an easy course.

Well, fencing isn't particularly easy, especially if your exercise regime for the last two to three years has consisted of "walking around downtown flyering for shows" and your diet has been 90% Mountain Dew straight from the milky teat of Saga, and the other 10% pasta from the same source. I hate being bad at things, so committing to fencing has been weird for me. I can't just stand on the sidelines and be sassy. Being sassy is the national pastime of my people, the effete pseudo-intelligencia, along with keeping our elbows off the table and pretending to have memorized David Sedaris. I've gone into it with an open intention to work real hard, fuck up a lot, and generally try. In improv, the other thing that I do which is more than being smug and table manners, we value failure and seeing people fail and being open to failure as where a lot of the "truth" nuggets that make up a funny scene come from. It is like panning for gold, except if you're a prospector in every scene eventually your improv coach will catch on and tell you not to do that any more. This



## THE OMEN HAIKU

*views in the Omen  
do not necessarily  
reflect the staff's views*

is because failure is a really useful and valuable tool, and one we as fallible human beings are blessed with using an awful lot. I like to think that i'm getting "better" at fencing, although my lungs still drag my foot behind me like Torgo in Manos the Hands of Fate, so clearly there's still room for lots of juicy failure.

The other important thing about fencing for me is that exercise feels really, really good. Maybe not at the time, when you're doing inchworms across the floor and oh god everyone is faster than you and then when you stand up your ears pop so your face feels weird and you have head rush and why is everyone faster than me. But the endorphins are great, and even when those start to wear off, you've tricked your brain into feeling like you've accomplished something and your body feels better for having actually moved, so your back isn't sore all the time, and you start to sit up straighter. Getting stronger is a super great feeling. Those silly

finger-shoes aside, people didn't evolve biologically into Redditdrones. Or, they haven't, yet. We are still optimized for some kind of active lifestyle and our brains and joints and such are happier when we act on that.

So even though doing deep knee bends is uncomfortable and doing something I'm not good at feels risky in a way I'm not comfortable with, I feel awesome for it. I really like fencing, and I want to keep doing it. So whatever it is that you've been wanting to do for a while, but you think you're going to be bad at, or you've been putting off because you don't want to take the risk, or have people see you fail, fuck that do it now. If it's fencing or wrestling or learning to speak German, great, do it! If it's writing poetry or learning to paint or finishing a short story, great! Submit it to the Omen. We'll publish it, lay it out in the delightful pages of this volume, and love you all the more. If it's coming to Omen layout, best of all! See you Thursday.

## EDITORIAL:

*Fencing is like Chess but not Shitty*

# Section: Speak

## A Realization in the Shower

Zilong Wang

I realized something a while ago in the shower.

As I stood in the shower, my mind was doing its own thing, coming up with all kinds of random thoughts. "Oh, I shouldn't have made that comment in the class today. That was very embarrassing." Or, "I still need to finish the paper, but I am behind the schedule." I was either regretting over the past, or worrying about the future. This muddled state of mind went on and on, until I suddenly found myself done with showering. I didn't even pay any attention to the shower because my mind was preoccupied with random thoughts, none of which I could recall clearly. So, I not only wasted the chance to enjoy the shower, but also wasted ten minutes of mental activity because I can't remember what was in my head. What a bad deal!

Then I realized how much of our life is wasted in this state of mind: on the bus, in the class, while walking, before falling asleep... We are not able to enjoy the moment because our minds are somewhere else; and afterward we can't even recall what our minds were doing.

So, ever since then, every time I shower, I concentrate my mind and speak to my body. "Dear head, you enable me to think, to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to speak. You represent me in front of the world, and you've done such a good job!" "Dear legs, I am grateful that you've brought me all over the world, and you never complain." "Dear stomach, I am sorry that I sometimes eat too much. I was favoring the pleasure of my mouth over your health. I won't do that anymore." "Dear body parts, I am lucky to have all of you here --- Imagine if some components are missing!"

As I speak to my body and pat it on the back, my body feels happy, and that makes me happy, too. My German host family once told me that if you talk to your flowers everyday, your flowers will grow better. So, I asked my body, "You have done so much for me. What can I do for you?" My body thought for a while and said, "Feed me healthy food. Give me fresh air. Let me go exercise. Let me have enough rest. Don't punish me for emotion's fault. Don't twist me to fit other people's judgment. Love me as you love yourself."

I will take my body's advice seriously. Because we will be together all the way till the end.



## Don't Feed the Trolls

Devin Morse

I want to suggest a New Year's Resolution for our entire Hampshire community. Next time someone writes a homophobic slur in a gazebo, or spray paints sexist imagery on the graffiti wall, or writes a racist article in the Omen, and so on, I want us all to do the following:  
Absolutely nothing.

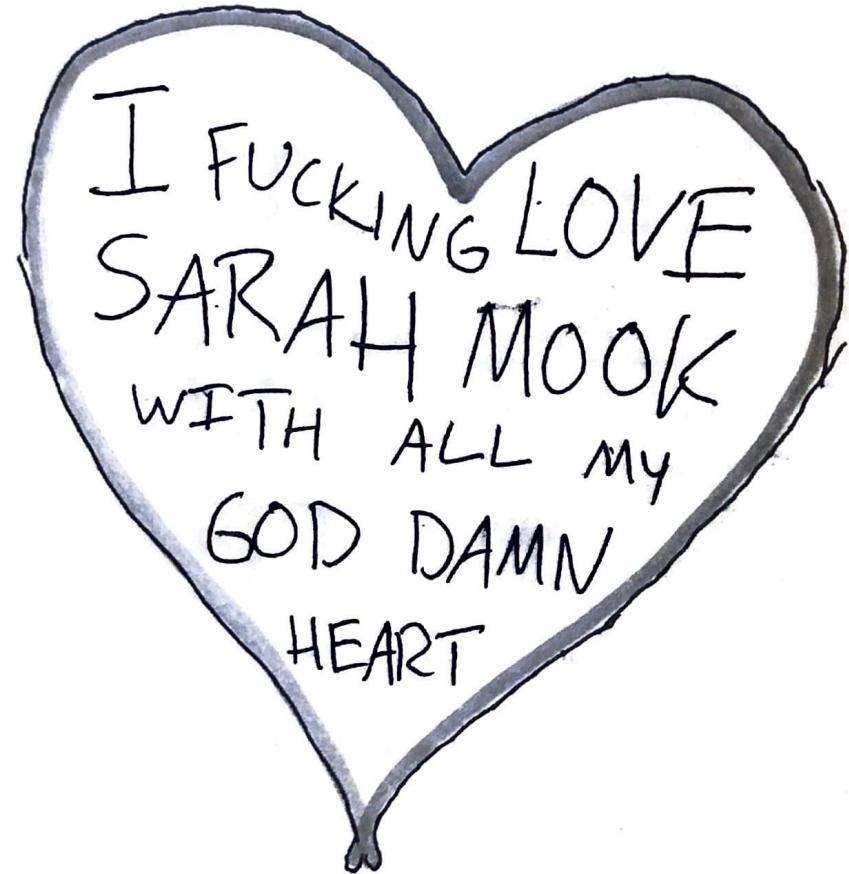
I want us to ignore it completely. Wash off the writing, spray paint over the image, write your own article. I know this will be hard. I know we'll feel upset and threatened. I know we'll feel the urge to write an all-community letter or article in a student publication expressing our concern. We'll want to inform administration and move them to action. We'll want to hold an all community meeting to educate people and try to prevent these incidences in the future.

But the fact is, we'll never prevent these sort of things from happening, for one simple reason: there are assholes in the world. Even at Hampshire. Trolls, more specifically. And a reaction is exactly what they're looking for. The more widespread the better. Every angry community letter we write or community meeting we hold is only encouraging the trolls to prod us more. Get the administration involved and it's a freaking party!

I can't tell you how many times I have received a response to one of these incidences where that response was the first time I heard about that incident. This is counterproductive. These incidences do not merit a response, and doing so only legitimizes them. It encourages future assholes to try to cause a scene, secure in the knowledge that they will succeed. So yeah. Next time, ignore it. The people who do these sort of things do not deserve our reaction.



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Section: Hate  
A Bunch of  
self-aggrandizing  
bullshit.



# Section: Lies

## Some Great Words

Ben Batchelder

### Lies of Words

Veranda, Pulsion, Cataclysm, Skilletagh, Shelf,  
 Zymurgy, Octopod, Eggster, Muntain, Zooty,  
 Lubricith, Mammoth pants, Dicks, Grousemon  
 Soder, Laramie, Grandmather, Sonn, Puntificate,  
 Franticron, Defenstrate, Macadamia, Genuflect,  
 Nabs, Transubstantate, Helwak, Omnitrix, Palomino,  
 Indulitable, Wiley, Minifafon, Tarpaulin, Tamarind,  
 Mangrove, Merengue, Comeuppance, Twelve, Tepeh, Pica,  
 Mandrill, Hydrocephalus, Brachycephalus, Spud, Trundelley,  
 Shunt, Front, Ganymede.



### Miss January

### Advice

Greg "Abbey" Larsen

Dear Abbey,

What's wrong with you?

- Whiny Bastard in New York

I'm giving the advice here, cheese. But since you asked so kindly:

I am responsible for over 750 shopliftings in the Pioneer Valley. You name it, I've managed to stuff it into my coat and walk out a door. Phones, computers, live tropical lizards, anything. You think I haven't stolen a helicopter? You don't know shit, son. I fence everything I steal myself. I'm an entrepreneur. And a damn good one, too. Ask your grandma if she knows about my business. I'll wait. I'll wait.

She knows, doesn't she?

- Abbey

Dear Abbey,

Oh, what a day. I was playing basketball with some friends in West Philadelphia when some tough-looking kids approached us. Boy, did they look like trouble! My fragile mother is always so frightened at the prospect of violence. And this particular incident was just too much for her. I'm now living with my somewhat wealthy relatives in California. How am I supposed to cope with this new lifestyle?

- Out of Place in Bel-Air

Out of Place,

I know it's tough to move, and I bet you miss all your friends from back home. Even though you might not feel comfortable in California, your auntie and uncle can provide you with a safe, nurturing home as you round out the remainder of your teenage years and blossom into a respectable young man. You might consider this an opportunity to learn more about your family and life and culture on the other side of the country. And who knows? They might even learn from you! Life throws you a lot of surprises at you sometimes, but you sound like a smart enough person to make the best of it. Good luck!

- Abbey

Dear Abbey,

I don't like a publication at my college. They publish everything they get, even if they think it's crazy or stupid. It's a mess! In fact, I think it's a bunch of self-aggrandizing bullshit. How can I best open a dialogue about the quality of the publication and its content, as well as its goals and principles?

- From the Internet

Send in a submission. Even if it's a scathing would-be indictment of them and all they stand for, it's content and they'll publish it. They love you even if you hate them - in fact, if you hate them, they will love you more.

- Abbey

Dear Abbey,

I'm a 67 year old man, and every time I look in the mirror in my bath room I see a big gay black man standing right behind me whispering naughty words while breathing heavily.

But when I turn around there's none there, it's like I'm going crazy, or seeing ghosts.

It is true that I did hear some weird rumors of the house being haunted before I bought it, but this is ridiculous! But seriously I need some advise on what to do!

- Ghost Problem in New York

This is a problem that many readers have written to me about. I sent Ghost Problem and everyone else the number of a reputable exorcist who can help with big gay black men in the mirror who whisper naughty words while breathing heavily in the mirror. If you're experiencing this problem, or have another advice question to ask, don't hesitate to submit it to the Omen.

OH MY GOSH



Jonathan "Omen Kid" Gardner



*Cut and Keep - Just in Case*  
Fiona Stewart-Taylor

# Shithouse Poet

Mitchell A. Krieger

A couple summers ago while camping in the Rocky Mountains, I was sitting on the can and some graffiti on the stall's wall caught my eye. It was a short poem by a poet who calls himself the Shithouse Poet. Soon I came to find that he had written poems on the walls of many bathroom stalls all around the campground.

And I expect the Shithouse Poet has "published" his works in many other stalls around the country, although I have never come across them after I left that campground. So I have compiled his works that I have discovered for you to enjoy here today. This is not the exact poems because some of the poems had been partially painted over, scribbled over, or simply had just been worn out.

Regardless, the works of the Shithouse Poet below I have to say are pretty accurate. So enjoy!

They paint these walls to cover my pen,  
But the Shithouse Poet strikes again!

People come to sit and think  
Some people come to shit and stink  
I came here to scratch my balls  
And write this shit on the walls

As I sit here all broken hearted  
Tried to shit but only farted  
Then one day I took a chance  
Tried to fart and shit my pants

Often times I sit and wonder  
What become of bathroom plunder?

To the fiery pits of hell,  
Or to the public drinking well?  
Reading this could make one think  
Is it safe what I drink?  
All the water isn't nice  
For every drink always think twice

Those who write on bathroom walls  
Roll their shit in little balls  
Those who read those lines of wit  
Catch those little balls of shit

Once your turn your back on your mental oppressor  
Your mind may be free to do its own thinking and  
believe in itself

Smoke a smoke, not a butt  
Bone a virgin not a slut  
If I die bury me deep  
Base a river at my feet  
Roll a joint in my hand

And I'll smoke my way to the promise land

As I sit here pissing and farting  
Wanting to shit before departing  
They paint these walls to cover my pen,  
But the Shithouse Poet strikes again!

Continue to look for more poems by the artistic Genius, The Shit House Poet

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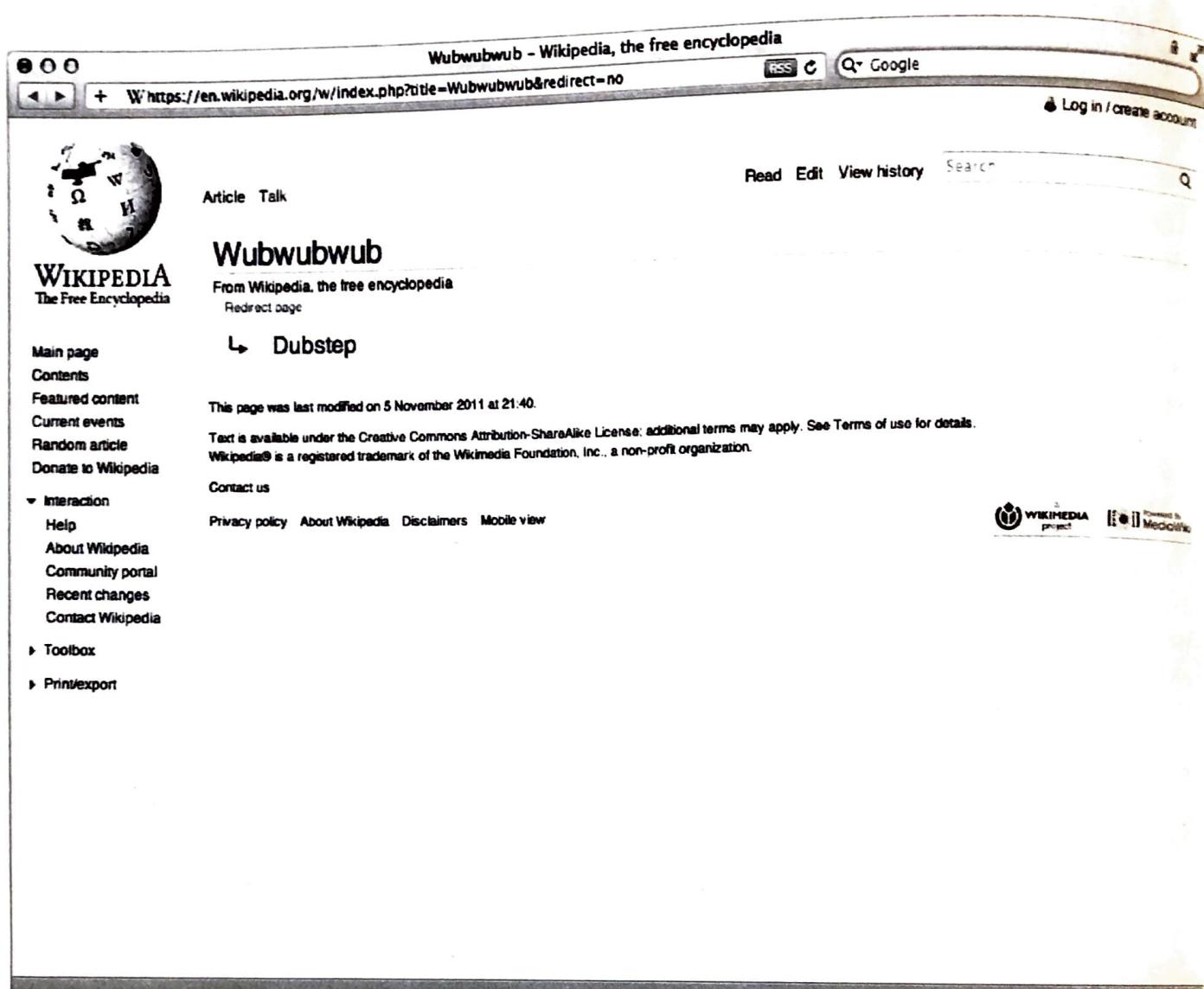
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